SALSA: Structure-Aware LoRA for Summarizing Agendas

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Abstract

Meeting summarization is a critical task in organizational knowledge management, yet existing approaches suffer from two fundamental limitations: naive token-level truncation that breaks semantic coherence, and computationally expensive full fine-tuning impractical for resource-constrained deployments. This paper presents SALSA (Structure-Aware LoRA for Summarizing Agendas), a dual-modification framework addressing both limitations simultaneously on the MeetingBank benchmark. SALSA combines (1) sentence-boundary-aware chunking with sliding overlap, and (2) selective LoRA on cross-attention layers, reducing trainable parameters to 0.21% of the full model (294K vs. 139.7M). A 2x2 ablation study demonstrates two key findings: sentence-aware chunking maintains performance equivalent to full fine-tuning (ROUGE-1: 65.92 vs. 65.48), and chunking substantially improves LoRA effectiveness by +6.69 ROUGE-1 points over LoRA-only baseline. These findings establish SALSA as a practical approach for efficient organizational meeting summarization.

Index Terms *-- meeting summarization, LoRA, sentence-aware chunking, efficient fine-tuning, MeetingBank*

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of organizational meetings in corporate and governmental settings has created a pressing need for automated summarization. Meeting transcripts present unique challenges: they substantially exceed the input limits of standard encoder-decoder models, with MeetingBank [1] transcripts averaging 2,965 words (max 67,634), far beyond BART's 1,024-token limit [2].

Current truncation-based approaches discard critical information from middle and tail sections of transcripts, where formal decisions and votes frequently appear. Additionally, full fine-tuning requires substantial compute resources, rendering deployment impractical for resource-constrained organizations.

This paper introduces SALSA (Structure-Aware LoRA for Summarizing Agendas), addressing both challenges through two complementary modifications evaluated via systematic ablation on MeetingBank:

1) Sentence-boundary-aware chunking with sliding overlap preserving semantic coherence.

2) Selective LoRA on cross-attention layers, reducing trainable params by 99.79%.

The two quantified contributions of SALSA are:

Claim 1: +6.69 ROUGE-1 -- chunking improves LoRA (K4 vs K2)

Claim 2: 99.79% -- parameter reduction vs. full fine-tuning

II. RELATED WORK

A. Meeting Summarization

MeetingBank [1] introduced a large-scale benchmark of city council meeting transcripts, providing 6,892 segment-level summarization instances. Subsequent work has used MeetingBank primarily as an out-of-domain evaluation dataset for prompt compression [5] and consistency evaluation, rather than as the primary fine-tuning target with efficiency constraints.

B. Parameter-Efficient Fine-Tuning

LoRA [4] introduces low-rank decomposition matrices into model weights, enabling competitive performance with a fraction of trainable parameters. While extensively studied for classification and generation [6], its application to long-document summarization with structured chunking strategies has not been systematically investigated on meeting datasets.

C. Long Document Handling

Approaches include sparse attention [7], hierarchical encoding, and chunk-based processing [8]. The interaction between chunking boundary strategies and efficient fine-tuning methods remains understudied, particularly for meeting transcript domains where truncation systematically discards late-appearing decision content.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Problem Formulation

Given transcript T of arbitrary length and reference summary R, we learn mapping f(T) -> R using BART-base. The challenge is | tokens(T)| >> max_input_length, requiring a document handling strategy evaluated under two fine-tuning regimes: full parameter update and selective LoRA.

B. Sentence-Aware Chunking

We segment transcripts into sentences via NLTK Punkt tokenizer and construct chunks greedily, enforcing sentence boundaries:

Ci = {sj,...,sk} s.t. sum(tokens) <= 512

Each chunk Ci+1 begins with the last 2 sentences of Ci (overlap), maintaining contextual continuity. During training, each chunk is paired with the original full reference summary, exposing the model to diverse contextual windows per document.

C. Selective LoRA on Cross-Attention

We restrict LoRA to encoder_attn.q_proj and encoder_attn.v_proj in each BART decoder layer -- layers that determine which encoder representations the decoder attends to during generation. LoRA is applied via the HuggingFace PEFT library [5]. This yields:

Trainable: 294,912 params (0.21% of 139.7M)

LoRA config: rank r=16, alpha=32, dropout=0.1.

D. Hierarchical Inference

At inference, transcripts are chunked and each chunk is summarized independently. Chunk summaries are concatenated and passed through a second summarization pass for the final output, ensuring complete transcript coverage without architectural modification.

E. Ablation Design (2x2)

We conduct a factorial ablation with two binary factors: chunking strategy (sentence-aware vs. naive truncation) and fine-tuning (full FT vs. selective LoRA), yielding K1-K4. All conditions: BART-base, 3 epochs, lr=5e-5, effective batch=16.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL SETUP

A. Dataset

TABLE I

MeetingBank Dataset Statistics

Split	Original	Chunked	Avg Transcript (words)	Avg Summary (words)
Train	5,169	41,502	2,965	60
Validation	861	-	2,891	58
Test	862	-	2,903	61

B. Evaluation & Implementation

We report ROUGE-1/2/L [11] on the held-out test split (862 examples) with Porter stemming. All experiments use BART-base [2] via HuggingFace Transformers [6], dataset loaded via HuggingFace Datasets [15], LoRA via PEFT [5], sentence tokenization via NLTK Punkt [14]. Training uses fp16 mixed precision on NVIDIA Tesla T4 (16GB). Baseline uses naive truncation at 1,024 tokens; chunked conditions use sentence-aware chunking at max_tokens=512, overlap=2.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Main Results

TABLE II

Ablation 2x2 Results on MeetingBank Test Set

Model	R-1	R-2	R-L	Params	Time(min)
K1: Baseline+FullFT	65.48	54.73	62.42	140M	34.3
K2: Baseline+LoRA	37.68	25.46	32.26	294K	33.7
K3: Chunking+FullFT	65.92	54.74	62.68	140M	166.3
K4: SALSA (proposed)	**44.37**	**28.87**	**38.88**	**294K**	**112.6**

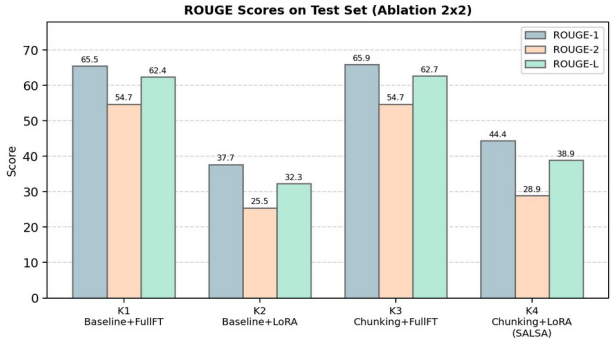

Fig. 1. ROUGE scores across all four ablation conditions on MeetingBank test set.

B. Claim 1: Chunking Improves LoRA (+6.69 ROUGE-1)

K4 (SALSA) achieves ROUGE-1 44.37 vs. K2 (Baseline+LoRA) 37.68, a +6.69 point improvement attributable solely to the chunking strategy. ROUGE-2 improves +3.41 and ROUGE-L improves +6.62. This synergistic interaction occurs because chunking expands the training set from 5,169 to 41,502 examples, providing LoRA's constrained parameter budget with substantially more diverse training signal.

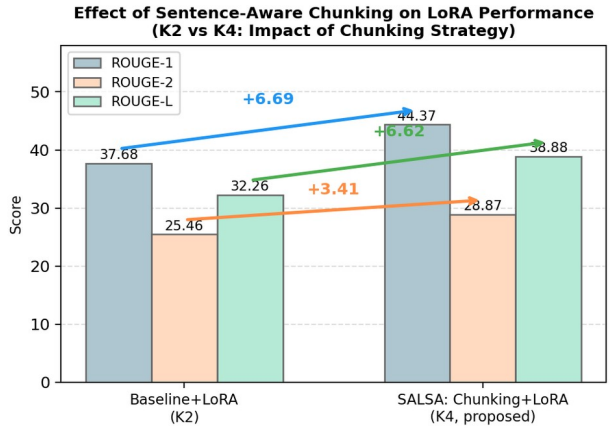

Fig. 4. Effect of sentence-aware chunking on LoRA performance (K2 vs K4). Arrows show ROUGE improvements from chunking.

C. Claim 2: 99.79% Parameter Reduction

With only 294K trainable parameters (0.21% of 139.7M), SALSA reduces computational requirements by 99.79% compared to full fine-tuning. The performance cost relative to K3 is -21.55 ROUGE-1 -- a quantified trade-off organizations can evaluate against their computational constraints.

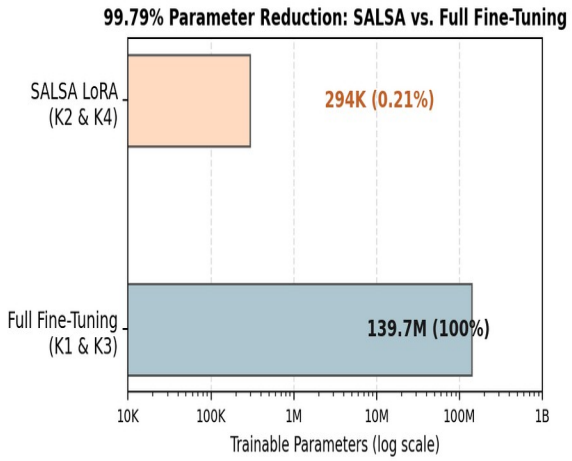

Fig. 3. Parameter efficiency: SALSA LoRA uses only 0.21% trainable parameters vs. full fine-tuning (99.79% reduction).

D. Finding 3: Chunking Preserves Full FT Quality

K3 (Chunking+FullFT, ROUGE-1: 65.92) achieves performance essentially equivalent to K1 (Baseline+FullFT, ROUGE-1: 65.48), with a marginal improvement of +0.44 ROUGE-1. This establishes that sentence-aware chunking does not sacrifice summarization quality -- a prerequisite for the validity of our overall framework.

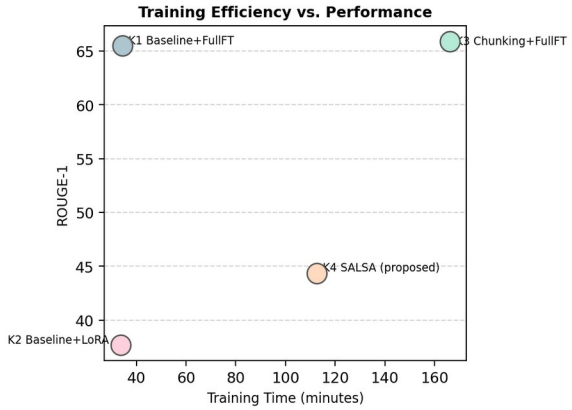

Fig. 2. Training efficiency vs. ROUGE-1 performance. SALSA (K4) offers parameter efficiency at a quantified performance cost.

E. Limitations

ROUGE captures lexical overlap but not factual faithfulness. Future work should incorporate faithfulness metrics (BERTScore, SummaC). Broader LoRA target modules may reduce the full FT performance gap. K4 training time (112.6 min) exceeds K2 (33.7 min) due to expanded dataset size.

VI. CONCLUSION

We presented SALSA, combining sentence-aware chunking and selective cross-attention LoRA for efficient meeting summarization on MeetingBank. The ablation establishes two quantified contributions: (1) chunking improves LoRA by +6.69 ROUGE-1 (K4 vs K2), and (2) selective LoRA reduces trainable parameters by 99.79% vs. full fine-tuning. A third finding confirms chunking preserves full FT quality (K3 vs K1: +0.44 ROUGE-1). These results provide an empirically grounded efficiency-performance trade-off framework for organizational meeting summarization deployment. Future work includes faithfulness evaluation, broader LoRA targets, and extension to multilingual meeting corpora.

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